

ISU News

Alum captures another technology teaching award for Honey Creek

December 21, 2006

What do students of an award-winning industrial technology education teacher do in class? Think up products like "Brother Be Gone" and launch water-and-air-propelled rockets at the end of term.

Over the past 13 years, classroom activities like these have been dreamed up by Indiana State University alumni Ken Amos and Doug Dillion. Their "let's make this fun," tag-team approach as industrial technology instructors at Honey Creek Middle School have gained state, national and international recognition.

Most recently, Amos received a 2006 Teacher Excellence Award from Technology Educators of Indiana at its 75th annual conference in Lafayette.

Earlier this year, Dillion was one of 44 in the nation -- out of 75,000 nominated -- to receive a 2006 Disney Teacher Award. And in 2005, Amos and Dillion's classroom programs at Honey Creek were selected by the International Technology Education Association for the National Program Excellence Award.

"We've been pretty innovative here," Amos said. "When I received my master's in industrial technology education at ISU in 1986, I could see that the old days of industrial arts -- of building bookshelves and birdhouses -- were coming to an end. I knew that if we didn't change with the technology, it would swallow us up, so I have always been on the lookout for new and different things."

"New and different" was joined with effective and fun when Amos and Dillion teamed up in 1994 and hatched the idea of modular learning stations at the Honey Creek technology lab. With help from grant funding, and corporation and industry support, they established physical units in the classroom which focused on the four different subgroups of industrial technology education -- transportation, construction, communication and manufacturing.

"We have really been able to get the students involved in their learning," Amos said. "By involving students in a wide variety of live demonstrations and hands-on activities, using real-life scenarios, they can experience how technology will impact their lives, regardless of their futures."

And the students also get to show off their hard work.

"As part of our transportation segment, the students build a water-and-air-propelled rocket," he said. "At the end of every term, we invite their parents and families to our Evening of Technology, when we launch the rocket outside for everyone to see."

For the communications segment, students formulate an idea for an original product and then create a marketing plan for it.

"They've come up with products like 'Brother Be Gone' and 'Nerd Away' which come as a spray," Amos said. "And just like with a real product, they have to market it, so they draw up storyboards and create a commercial."

Amos received his bachelor's degree in industrial arts education and industrial supervision from ISU, and he says the time he spent in college helped him learn to relate to other people and gave him the opportunity to be outgoing.

"I was really involved with Union Board and the Blue Berets, and was on the homecoming committee," Amos said. "This provided me with a real background in relating to students and finding ways I can reach them at their level."



Ken Amos (right), an industrial technology education teacher at Honey Creek Middle School and Indiana State University alumnus, received a 2006 Teacher Excellence Award from Technology Educators of Indiana at its 75th annual conference in Lafayette. Pictured with Amos is Doug Dillion (left), also a technology teacher at Honey Creek and ISU alum. Dillion has been Amos' colleague for the past 13 years, and the two have won many awards for their teaching excellence.

Dillion will be taking on a new role starting in January 2007, by becoming the Vocational/Technical director for the Vigo County School Corp., but Amos intends to carry on the tradition of excellence they established together at Honey Creek.

"I like to go outside the box when I teach; dress up like a professor and wear hard hats that say different things, like, 'Hard at Work,'" Amos said. "The kids are what inspire me and make it all so much fun."

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PHOTO: (high-resolution download)

Ken Amos

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